Preparing for Changes in District School Climate Policy

Colchester Public Schools
2024

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Overview

Outlines the updates and requirements introduced by the Connecticut School Climate Policy, as mandated by Public Act 23-167, starting in 2025.

Key Policy Objectives

- Ensure all students feel physically and emotionally safe and thrive academically.
- Build positive relationships and develop shared values within the school community.
- Promote restorative practices and social-emotional learning.

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Mandated Changes for 2025

- Adoption of Connecticut School Climate Policy: All schools must adopt and implement the Connecticut School Climate Policy from the 2025–2026 school year onwards.
- Restorative Practices: Implement evidence-based practices focused on building relationships, accountability, and reintegration for students.
- School Climate Improvement Plan: Each school must develop a data-driven improvement plan to address school climate issues.

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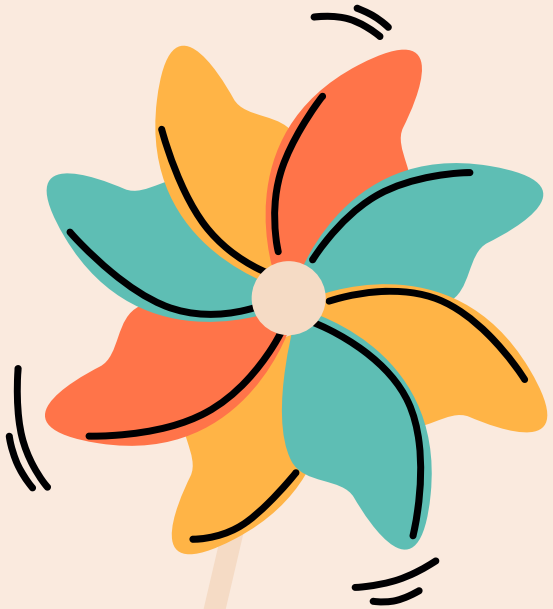
Updated Definition of Bullying

The legislature has vastly changed the definition of bullying:

Previous Definition: “severe, persistent or pervasive”

New Definition: “unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance ”

(Pullman & Comley 2023).



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School Climate Coordinator & Specialist

Coordinator Role:

Superintendent or a designated administrator will lead district-level school climate initiatives.

Specialist Role:

Principal or designated staff will implement school-specific improvement plans and restorative practices.

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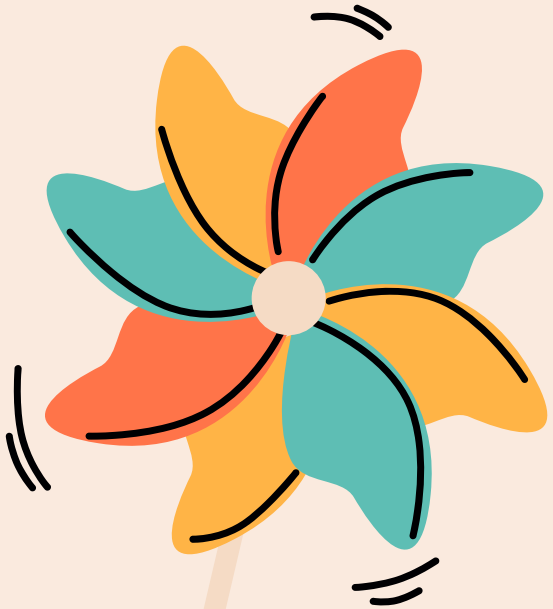
Core Definitions

School Climate: Refers to the quality of relationships, teaching practices, and school environment.

Restorative Practices: Focus on resolving conflicts through collaborative processes, holding students accountable while reintegrating them into the school community.

Challenging Behavior: Includes any behavior tha disrupts learning or safety.



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Restorative Practices Implementation

Training: All staff will receive training on restorative practices, social-emotional learning, and behavior interventions starting in the 2024–2025 school year.

Approach: Schools must use restorative methods to address conflicts, focusing on relationship-building and conflict resolution.

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School Climate Improvement Plans

- **Data-Driven Process:** Use survey data and other metrics to create tailored plans that prevent and address challenging behavior.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve the entire school community, including students, teachers, and parents, in the improvement proces

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Annual Climate Surveys

Requirement:

Schools must administer climate surveys biennially, assessing student, staff, and family perceptions of the school environment.

Purpose:

Data collected will help refine school improvement plans and address ongoing challenges.

Community and Family Engagement:

Mandates the formation of school climate committees that include parents, students, and community members, ensuring diverse input in climate improvement plans.

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Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention

Policy Update: The definition of bullying now explicitly includes cyberbullying and teen dating violence.

Reporting and Action: Schools must adopt clear procedures for reporting bullying and cyberbullying using a uniform bullying complaint form from CABE, as authorized by state legislation ensuring swift and restorative responses in accordance with implementation guidance.

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Key Takeaways:

- The new policy emphasizes restorative practices, data-driven climate improvements, and regular staff training.
- Schools are required to adopt a comprehensive plan for addressing school climate, bullying, and behavior issues with a focus on inclusivity and positive relationships.
- Accountability has been strengthened

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Conclusion

Next Steps: Preparing staff for the upcoming changes through training in 2025.

Goal: Continue to cultivate a restorative and inclusive school environment that fosters academic success and emotional well-being for all students tied to our goal of ensuring all members of our school community feel valued, accepted, and connected.

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Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

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